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PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.



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HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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## THE DEBT OF STRENGTH.

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"I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians; both to the wise and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also."—ROM. i. 14, 15.

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The Jews were accustomed to divide the human race into two parts—those that were Jews, and those that were not. The division is very simple, and it entirely suited their pride. The best part of the human race were Jews; and all the rest, those that were not Jews, whatever they happened to be, were Gentiles. That word, *Gentiles*, was their name for all the scraps and leavings, all the odds and ends, all the worthless bits of humanity.

In this the Jews did not differ from their near neighbors, the Greeks, who were accustomed to divide the world in the same way, into those that were Greeks, and those that were not Greeks, only instead of calling those who were not Greeks *Gentiles*, they called them *Barbarians*. So there were the Greeks—a small handful; and the Barbarians—the vast outside multitude.

This in literature, simply, would be conceited and arrogant; but when you consider that such a use of language was a very faint representation of the line of conduct, and of feeling which was underneath it, it becomes a matter of very great moral moment. The outsiders were pensioners. They were in the situation of dogs that eat the crumbs which fall



from their master's table. The Jew regarded his duty as lying within the circle of national life. All the rest, what he did beyond that was, in the main, from courtesy and not from obligation. It was, as he looked upon it, so much *extra*, that nobody had a right to expect or demand. And the Greeks felt that toward Greeks they owed national duties, patriotic relations, but that whatever kindness was shown to the Barbarians was unmerited, and was a work of supererogation on the part of the Greeks. Their human duties they thought stopped with those who belonged to their nationality; and if they exercised justice and equity and kindness toward those who were outside of it they regarded that as so much virtue more than anybody had a right to demand of them, or expect from them.

This trait has not stopped with the Jews, nor with the Greeks. The feeling that we owe our countrymen much, and foreigners little, has come down to our time. Some of the most powerful tendencies of Christianity have hardly yet entered into the minds of men, and those derivative habits or influences which spring from the primitive man, in his low and animal condition, yet rule.

We are all acquainted with the record of the time when, if by chance a stranger was shipwrecked, or otherwise lost, and fell upon an island, or on the shore of a different stock or race, his life was supposed to belong to that people, and they could slay him, or make him a slave, or do what they pleased with him. In that age of the world it was a perilous thing to go into another nation.

The origin of that custom, you need not go far to see. Who, that has lived upon a farm, has not noticed among cattle that same thing? If you drive a strange ox into a herd of oxen, they all begin to gore him, and he has to go through a probationary period before he is recognized as one of their number. If a strange fowl is carried into a barn-yard, instantly all the other fowls that are there turn against him. They look upon him as an outsider, and an intruder, and fight him. And the same spirit runs through the animal kingdom. All animals go on the principle of taking care of their own young, and those that are near to them, and fight-

ing all others. And such was the spirit, in its primitive condition, of the human animal. The early records of our race are records of kindness in a very limited circle, of which the man himself was the center, he being surrounded by his household, and those who were nearly connected with him. Whoever added to his treasure, or to his glory, were objects of his favor. In other words, the principle of selfishness lay at the root of kindness, and as far as it was for the interest of a man to be kind in his neighborhood, or in his nation, so far his kindness extended, in its imperfect forms. Beyond that, there was no obligation and no law recognized.

This, in uninstructed natures, is still the universal tendency. Where the gospel has not introduced a new style of ethics, this element of self-interest reigns with great power; and even where it has, that element is not yet eradicated. It still inheres throughout Christian nations, in the church, in government, in policies, in a thousand forms.

With the development of the new life; with the development of the love of God in the soul; with the development of a life of benevolence, was formed a new schedule of duties. From the flesh-life, and the primitive condition of the animal race of men; from the law of selfishness, and the law of force there was developed, higher than that, another ethical principle—that of disinterested kindness. It was a totally different principle, acting in opposite directions from the former one, and upon totally different lines.

In the second scheme of morals, the law is, *Do good to all men, as you have opportunity*. In other words, it is, *Do good to men in the proportion in which they need to have good done to them*. According to this law, you are to do good to those that are around you—to your neighbors. And if you ask, “Is *neighbor* a term which is local? are we to do good to those who live near us?” I reply, that it was interpreted by the parable of our Saviour to mean those who need you.

A man, going down to Jericho, fell among thieves. They stripped him, and wounded him, and left him half dead. In connection with this event, you have personified the class-instincts which existed among men. There came by that way a priest. He saw him, but, perceiving that he was not a

priest, he said, "My duties are to those of my own kind, he is not of that sort, and I cannot stop." There also came by a Levite. He looked on him, and saw that he was not a Levite, and said, "Well, he does not belong to my set." He saw that he had no relations to him, and passed on. There likewise came by a Samaritan. Now a Samaritan was a most unsavory man in the nostrils of the Jews. All people have their chimney, out of which they let their smoke pass; everybody must have something to damn; the malign and hating instincts of men seek some avenue of escape: and nations have their scape-goats, on which to vent their hatred and scorn. And we have it in religion. Every sect has some other sect which they regard as the off-scouring of the earth, and upon which they heap all the terms of contumely, and all the epithets of dislike, which they can command. Those of one sect regard those of another sect as heterodox; as pretenders; as insincere; as worldly; as seeking only varnish, etc. Each sect looks upon those who are outside of themselves as more than suspicious. And the bitterest feelings of the Jews went out toward the Samaritans. They hated them all the more because they were rivals. They pretended to be orthodox; and they had a priest-hood; they were parallel with the Jews; and the Jews hated them to such a degree that you might almost have thought a Jew was a Christian! So, after our Saviour had interpreted the law of the neighbor, and explained what was the sphere and circuit of obligation man to man; after he had taken the priest, and shown that he did not care for humanity, and did not relieve the man who had fallen among thieves because he did not belong to his class; and after he had taken the Levite, and shown the same in regard to him; then he took the Samaritan. A Samaritan was enough to make a Jew swear at any time, even in the middle of public worship. A Jew scorned the very name of a Samaritan. And yet a Samaritan was the very man whose conduct Jesus commended. He went up to the unfortunate victim; he came where he was; he bound up his wounds; he gave him medicine; he put him on an ass, and carried him to an inn; he paid his bills in advance; and not to stint his kindness, he said to the inn-keeper, "If he needs



anything that I have not provided, give it to him, and when I come again I will pay thee."

Such is the parable. Its drift is to interpret the meaning of the term *neighbor*. It teaches that *those who need service* are your neighbors, no matter who they are.

Paul says, "I am a debtor." We begin to draw near to that class of ideas from which we are to interpret his meaning. We may imagine in what respect he was a debtor to the Jews; he had received much from them. But what had he received from the Greeks, that he was bound to pay back? Was he a disciple of their philosophy? He was not. Had he received from their bounty in the matter of art? No. One of the most striking things in history is the fact that Paul abode in Athens, and wrote about it, without having any impression made upon his imaginative mind, apparently, by its statues, its pictures, or its temples. The most gorgeous period of Grecian art poured its light on his path, and he never mentioned it. The New Testament is as dead to art-beauty as though it had been written by a hermit in an Egyptian pyramid, who had never seen the light of the sun. Then, what did he owe to the Greeks? Not philosophy, not art, and certainly not religion, which was feticism. What was there that he owed to the Gentiles—the great outlying barbaric multitude, as the Greeks would call them, or to the great multitude of Gentiles, as the Jews would call them? They had no revelation; they were in darkness; and he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, brought up in such a way that through him have come the light of God and Divine influences to the human race. He knew his mission. He was not a man who was likely not to know it. And what did he pay? Not a debt of literature, nor of art, nor of civil polity. Not a debt of pecuniary obligation; not any ordinary debt. He had nothing from all these outside sources. On the other hand, he was perpetually laying others under obligation by enlarging their horizon; by giving them nobler conceptions of manhood; by attempting to bring out and unfold higher and better elements of humanity; by changing the prevailing ideas of civility; by giving a new soul to law, and a new heart to national life. He was pouring out the spirit of

civilization, and laying the foundations of after excellence. What debt could he owe? And yet said he, "I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise." What could that debt be? Not interchange of values, as I have already intimated. It must have lain wholly in a condition of want which, to his moral consciousness, existed outside of himself, and his own conscious fullness of supply. The whole barbaric world was without the true knowledge of God; he had that knowledge; and he owed it to every man who had it not. All the civilized world was, in these respects, without the true inspiration; Paul had that inspiration; and he owed it to them, simply because they did not have it; and his debt to them was founded on this law of benevolence of which I have been speaking, which is to supersede selfishness, and according to which those who have are indebted to those who have not, the world over.

You perceive how wide, if this law were recognized, is the change that it would make everywhere. Let us apply it to some forms of society. It is the law which, when rightly interpreted, means that we are debtors in the ratio of our supply, and in the ratio of others' need. We are not debtors by commercial principle, nor by the law of equivalent. We are not debtors because we have received something for which we must pay a fair exchange, but simply on the ground that morally we have that which other people need. He who has wisdom owes it to the man who has no wisdom. "I am debtor both to the wise and to the unwise"—to the wise to give them more wisdom; to the unwise to give them some wisdom. We are debtors to those who are good, to help their goodness; and to those who are bad, to make them good. We are debtors to those who are high, because no matter how high a man is he still wants. If we have succor that others need, we owe it to them. No man lives unto himself. Living or dying, we are the Lord's—and that not in a narrow sense, but in the sense that we adhere to him as followers adhere to the chieftain, to do his will; the Lord's will was to give his life a ransom for many; and he gave it in a historical fact, by symbols bringing out the great truth of



truths, that it is the Divine nature to love, and that God, instead of being a quiescent, luxurious monarch, in the midst of all manner of enjoyments and dulcet harmonies, is the intensest Worker of the universe—One who sacrifices himself for men.

This is the key-note of creation—that God is giving forth his own life to raise men from the lowest form to the next higher, from this to the next higher, and from this to the next higher. If we are Christ's, it is because we interpret and exemplify, as he did, the true love of God. All those men who have the spirit of Christ are giving themselves forth a ransom for many, not in the same sense that he did, but according to the measure of their power and of their sphere. We are of Christ when we imitate him by giving ourselves for others.

In social development this law is to the last degree important. It is true, that there is such a thing as station, and that there are relative duties. The old gray-haired man and the child of five years of age do not stand on an equality; but in the largest application of the law of benevolence the old man owes the child more than the child owes him. I have seen children in families who were nothing but servants and slaves to their elders. They were the useful little errand children; they were the children to run and fetch; they were the children to stand and quiver at a look. It was said to them, "You are children, and you must know your place; you must be kept down." Surely, children should learn obedience and respect, and do the things which stand at the point where their powers naturally attack and engage in the offices of life; but, after all, children are, in the household, so far as their elders are concerned, to be objects on which the greater can exercise their disinterested benevolence. Father and mother, according to the great law of love, or of disinterested benevolence, owe the children all that there is in them. And in later life, the children, in reciprocal love or benevolence, owe themselves to the parents. While the child is weak, all the father's strength and experience and patience and courage belong to the child; and when the father is weak, the child, his youth having grown to manhood, and courage, and

strength, owes all his power and efficiency to the father. The law is the same in both cases. It acts in one way at the beginning and in the other way at the end. And it acts either way according to the law that that which is largest and strongest owes itself to that which is weakest and needy.

So it is with the relations of knowledge and refinement in society. Hardly yet do we find in literature, and hardly yet do we find anywhere, other than the primitive tendency. The true principle is growing, but it is not yet grown. Men who have knowledge and refinement naturally think themselves to be the first; and thinking themselves to be the first, they tend to separate themselves from their kind, and become objects of admiration and of service—that is, service rendered to them according to the false doctrine that because they have, they have a right to more.

We see in the age before ours—in the time of Pope and Swift—that English literature was disfigured by the most hideous heathenism. The common people were stigmatized in terms of contempt, leaving the vocabulary almost exhausted. Fine letters were considered as belonging to fine people; and those who were not of the educated and intelligent classes were remanded to a kind of literary darkness.

The spirit of that time is not gone yet. We have a great many men who are scholarly, and who have such a sense of the fitness of letters, and of their beauty, that they scorn the idea of being judged by the great unwashed common people. And so we see in notices of orations and discourses, “The audience was small,” but “it was select and appreciative.” Or, “There was a large audience;” “Who were they?” “Oh, Gog and Magog; odds and ends; everything, all jumbled together.” But were they not *men*? Is not a man something without a Mr. before his name? Do you suppose that in the day of judgment men will be judged by their hats or by their queues? Just what they are, and nothing else, will come before God in the last day. And yet how largely prevails this old-time feeling that to the wise the wise should go, that the wise appreciate the wise, and that other people belong by themselves—the low with the low, the vulgar with the vulgar, and common folks with common folks.

We see the same thing in Science ; for, although there be many instances of Christian men in scientific circles—such men as Faraday ; although there be many men who not only have no contempt for the ignorant, but have a most earnest desire for their enlightenment ; yet there is a tendency to arrogance and bigotry on the part of men of science. “The truth is not for its uses, but for its own sake,” men say. I say, There is nothing of so much value as men ; and truth for its own sake is no more important than a bubble for its own sake ; and the difference between the truth and a lie is the difference between the effects which they produce on the human conscience, or the human character. All creation is but the mere garment or dress of that which is the only unit of value, universal man, not in his appetites and passions, but in those qualities which make him a son of God, and an immortal creature ; and all truth is valuable according to its relations to him. To say that truth is studied and wrought out for its benevolent uses is Christian ; but to say that truth is to be studied and wrought out for its own sake is heathenish idolatry.

Both Literature and Science, in our day, are compelled to serve, as they should. Because there is in Literature so much of refinement, so much of instruction, so much that is of value to men who are vulgar by reason of ignorance, it ought, in its amplitude, to be a servant of ignorant people ; and because science has in it the power to develop so many truths that are important to the physical condition of men, and to their intellectual and moral condition by and by, it owes itself to those who are beneath it—for it is God’s almoner of bounty to men that are dying for lack of it.

The same line of thought is applicable to classes in society. Since the world began, society has been broken up into classes. It must of necessity be so broken up. And there is no harm in it provided the spirit of divine benevolence lives in classes. If a tree be tall, it must have under-leaves as well as top-leaves ; but where a tree does not know how to grow, and the top spreads, the under-leaves all die away, because they do not get the light of the sun ; and in society men tend to grow so that the upper-classes shall



dwarf the under-classes. Those who are superior are apt to exclude those who are inferior from the advantages which they enjoy. Now, men associate by elective affinity ; and it is proper that they should. It is proper that men of taste should consort with men of taste for the cultivation of their tastes ; it is proper for men of philosophy, by intercourse, to help each other in the development of philosophy ; it is proper for men of refinement of letters to aid one another in their particular department by association ; it is proper for men possessing large power of wealth to unite themselves for mutual benefit with those possessing a like power ; but when they say, even in spirit, that they are the upper class, and that humanity is mainly represented within the circle to which they belong, it is the quintessence of Judaism and Greekism, as set forth by the men who said, " We are the people, and wisdom shall die with us."

I suppose that in what are called the refined circles of this city and of the great city near us, there is an unconscious feeling of sovereignty and superiority—a kind of moral feeling that they vulgarize themselves if they are too free with those who are not of their sort. I suppose that in most of our great cities among what are called " the upper circles" or the " higher classes" there is this same feeling. I have no doubt that they have a sort of feeling of humanity and kindness ; I believe that when shaking their table-cloth they like to shake it where the chickens can pick up the crumbs ; I have no question that while their lamp gives them the light which they need they are willing that it should shine through the window and light other people outside ; I think they have a kind of philanthropy toward those who are in the sphere below them and inferior to them ; but you will take notice that when our Master was on earth, knowing that he came from God and was going to God again, and being conscious that he was infinitely superior to all that were around him, he consorted with men, not only, but took especial pains to show kindness to them so that they should understand that there was a real brotherhood existing between him and them. He, as you remember, went and took dinner, on the Sabbath, at the house of one of the rulers, one of the chief Pharisees ;

and when he sat down to the feast, publicans and harlots, sinners of every name, crowded in, and he ate with them and did not repel them.

Another instance, showing that he felt no repulsion to men, and to those who were low in station, was that in which the blind man came to him, and he did not chide him, but took him by the hand, and led him out of the town, making himself his companion, and then anointing his eyes, so that he saw. Why was all this unnecessary instrumentality? For here he was walking by the side of the poor blind beggar, like a friend, hand in hand, and restoring his sight in ways that made the man feel the very warmth of his bosom, as it were. It was an example of the recognition of brotherhood.

And so, in regard to those of you who belong to the superior classes in society, there is no harm in your being superior, provided you use your superiority aright. Men may say, "I am afraid that if I go down out of my class I shall stumble into the vulgarity of those with whom I associate;" but they do not believe that they will, when they say it. Men may say, "I belong to this class and I prefer to stay within it because all my sensibilities are gratified here;" but do you live to gratify yourself? Is gratifying one's self the end of life? Is that the Christian law? Has any man a right to hold himself in his class, and have no intercourse with those who are beneath him except that of a patron, and a far-off patron, sending down kindnesses to them? Is there a man that is superior who does not owe himself to those who are inferior? There is no other gift that is so worthy of giving as one's own self. God, when he would show his love to the world, gave himself; and what are you, that you shall not give yourselves? The higher you are, the more you owe yourselves to the very lowest and least; and you owe, not what you take in your hand, but what you have in your heart. You owe your taste, your sensibility, your accomplishments, your knowledge, your inner man. It is by the medicine of a living soul that dead souls are brought to life.

When, in the old time, the Prophet was called to minister to the widow's child, he stretched himself on the child, and put his face to the child's face, and laid his palm on the

child's palm, and brought his heart to the child's heart; and the child lived. There is nothing so life-giving to souls as other souls warming them. And we owe ourselves to our fellow-men. The poorer a man is the more he needs you; and the further he is from those states which belong to elevated humanity, the stronger is your obligation to make him a brother.

Revolutionary doctrines these—revolutionary indeed!

We have no right—no national right, and no political right—to treat the lower and outside elements of society on any other than the high and Christian rule—namely, that those who have are debtors to those who have not; that those who are good are debtors to those who are bad; that those who are refined are debtors to those who are unrefined; that those who are superior are debtors to those who are inferior.

In general, weak nations that stand beside Christian nations are destroyed. It is a painful thought, but it is true, that a colony of half-civilized men are less in danger in the neighborhood of savage men than in the neighborhood of civilized men. So little do men know how to carry the power of civilization that it eats out the life of barbarous nations like a canker. The history of civilization in its influence on nations that are uncivilized has taught this. And the stronger and intenser the nature of those that form the colonies, the more certain the waste.

I would not speak otherwise than well of our Puritan fathers. Once a year I eat dinner at Delmonico's, humbling myself and taking up my cross, together with my brethren of the New England Society, in memory of our forefathers who landed on Plymouth Rock. Far be it from us to undervalue that memory. We that would have pelted them with stones, if we had lived when they did, now build monuments over their graves, and pronounce eulogies on them. I think they meant to do well. They tried to do well by the Indians, but they did not know how; and the Indians have wasted, and wasted, as before a swelling flood. As the ill-compacted bank is worn away by every pulsation of the waves, so the Indian tribes have been worn away.

Here is this nation, so proud of its churches and acade-



mies and schools. You would think, to hear us talk of ourselves, that we had just dropped out of heaven. We are one of the most boastful nations in the world. If the Darwin theory be true, that we ascend from a lower stock, I think many of us came from the hens—for we never lay an egg without cackling immensely. We are proud of our civilization, of our Christianity, of our humanity, of our philanthropy; and we are sending missionaries all over the globe:—and that is right. But a weak nation cannot live by our side; and the Indians that remain are just as certainly going under, before the progress of civilization, as last year's leaves are going under before the plow. It is only a question of time. A few may be preserved by inter-marriage with the whites, but that would only be burying them in a white sepulcher. Inferior nations cannot bear the domination of this strong Anglo-Saxon race. They are either destroyed or absorbed by it.

How much benefit has Mexico derived from us? We have cut and carved, and cut and carved, and now we are waiting to cut and carve once more. We are saying boldly, "Mexico has got to come in." Our thought is, that it is the business of strong nations to eat up the weak ones, and thrive upon them.

Now, there is no nation on the globe that has adopted the Christian principle, and compelled public policy to act upon it—the principle, namely, that the strong must serve and care for the weak. We are acting, as a nation, on the primitive idea, according to the lion's ethics, that to the strong paw belongs the prey; and yet, I believe we are not worse than other nations. The law of selfishness is almost the universal law of civilized nations. Neither the law within nations, nor the law exterior to them, is conformable to Christ.

It is quite in vain for us to say that we are a Christian nation, so long as we are so only in spots, here and there. You might as well say that it is summer on my farm, where the ground has thawed out enough to make it muddy, but not enough for corn to be planted, or for anything to grow, as that this nation, or any nation, is Christian in the true sense of that word. The snow is mainly gone, but it lies in patches

here and there; there is just enough solar power to thaw the surface of the earth, that is all. After nearly two thousand years the power of Christianity has extended itself in intellectual directions, in creeds and dogmas, in the organization of churches, and methods of worship and government, in many ways; but it has been for the most part felt in the family. The family has been the scene of its benign influence, and chiefly it has kept in the family. As a force for molding nations and communities, its time is not yet come. There are no Christian nations. There are no nations that act on the principle that it is the duty of strength to take care of weakness; of goodness to take care of badness; of culture to take care of vulgarity; of purity to take care of impurity; of wealth to take care of poverty; of prosperity to take care of misfortune. That is almost a heresy in the world yet. But it is the law of Christ. It is the law of God's Word.

Apply this same principle to the administration of economy with any nation. We feel in our country that we are to take care of things that are already well cared for; and there is an element of truth in it. For instance, New England has been the chief mental breeding-ground of the nation. From her, more than from any other quarter, came our original civic ideas. There has been more influence derived from the brains of the old New England than from those of any other section of the country. Though very admirable tendencies have come from all along the line of the Atlantic, yet the tendencies which have had their rise in New England have been superior to any of these. Hence there are good reasons why New England should be maintained in her power, and why any decadence of her schools and colleges should be looked upon with alarm.

But, after all, not to the strong, especially, should strength be given, but to the weak. While there is to be conservation, the law of distribution should be such that the patriot and Christian should think, "Where are the ignorant masses? Where are the parts of our own land that have no elevating institutions?"

When the wind begins to move, it goes toward vacuum, and not toward those places where there are other winds to

keep it company; when heat stirs the air, it tends toward places that are exhausted of heat; and in accordance with the same great law which operates in these instances water knows how to run northward from the south, and southward from the north; and the atmosphere knows how to wrap the earth around, and maintain an equilibrium; but nations that call themselves Christian do not know how to obey this law of the greater serving the less, and of the stronger serving the weaker.

"The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider."

Churches, often, have not learned this law. They are mutual insurance companies. A church is a stock concern for the protection of its members. It is a close corporation established for the benefit of those who belong to it. But ought it not to be a light in a dark place? In proportion to the darkness ought there not to be light thrown out from it? Ought there not to go forth from the churches of our land an influence to those parts of it which are most neglected? Ought not those who are most prosperous to carry succor to those who are most needy? Ought not those who have plenty to consider those who lack?

To-day, throughout the whole South there is feebleness, want of means, distress, complication, by reason of disturbances occasioned by a reconstruction of political economy. Society there is going through a revolutionary period. Property has been destroyed, industry is crippled, there is paralysis in every department of enterprise. And toward that great land (ours, for we would not permit it to be anybody's else; ours, because its inhabitants are bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh) should go our sympathy. Thither, very largely, should the stream of our beneficence tend. We should send teachers and preachers, and whatever instrumentalities may be needed, to restore again the waste that war has made.

And westward, to a region untainted by the despotism of slavery, go the emigrant hordes of different nations and languages and customs, but united by the one element of personal liberty; and there, where they were not able to carry their schools and their churches; there where their



whole energy is taxed for supplying the material conditions of life ; there, where they have their huts to build, and their fences to make, and the tough, wiry surface of the prairie to rip up ; there, where the production of all the indispensable elements of civilization is enough to tax and exhaust their energy, how can they rise to the higher plane of development, and erect school-houses, and meeting-houses, and theological seminaries ? How can they surround themselves with the means of education and culture which it has required three centuries for us to unfold ?

Now, in giving, you are to give according to the divine injunction, not expecting to receive any return. Here we come to the principle that is contained in the passage which I read you in the opening service this morning :

“ When thou makest a dinner or supper, call not thy friends nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors, lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee, but when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and thou shalt be blessed ; for they cannot recompense thee ; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.”

We are not to seek our own kind. Our hospitality is not to be of that sort which will pay itself back again. Often what is called hospitality is simply trade.

You are invited to a great party. Now, great parties may be very pleasant—they seldom are, yet they may be ; but why do you go to them ? Look really at the subtle secret motive which leads you to go. There is no sin in dressing gaily, and going to a party, and being courteous, and behaving well ; but you will have to give another party, or else you will be written out of that set, and it will be said of you, “ They go to parties, but they do not give parties ” ; as now and then you will hear it said of a man, “ He takes drinks that others pay for, but he never pays for drinks that others take,” or, “ He is very willing to smoke when I offer him a cigar, but he never offered a cigar to me.” The feeling of obligation to make return for things received is nowhere stronger than in the matter of entertainments.

Now you are not, according to the Christian doctrine, at liberty to invite persons because you like them, or because they have invited you, simply. If you only invite such, you

are merely traffickers ; and the worst kind of traffickers, because you are trafficking in affection, hospitality, and other sacred elements. It is base to make merchandise of such things ; and Christ, in his condemnation of it, uses the strongest language, and commands us not to call in those who can pay us again, but to call in the poor who cannot repay us ; and he assures us that we shall have our reward in that high moral joy which disinterestedness brings to every man, here and hereafter. This law, if it were universally adopted, would transform the economies of things all over this land.

To-day is our day for taking up a collection in behalf of Home Missions. Of all the collections that we take up, I think I feel most interested in this one. I am a child of Home Missions. It was from the treasury of the Home Missionary Society that I took the money with which I came back to New England to get married—and it was “business” then, to come back ! It took me two full weeks to come from Cincinnati, and it cost me two hundred and fifty dollars to come and return. Having returned, I settled in Lawrenceburg, and had two hundred dollars for my yearly salary. During that year, and the next, and only the next, I was a pensioner on this Society. I went into a town that could not have supported me, and into a church that was not half as large as our present lecture-room, with a mere handful of people ; and I had to look to the churches in New England—this grand Home Missionary Society—for my daily bread. I never shall forget it. May my loaf grow small and waste, if I forget to contribute to the prosperity and wealth of this Society, which is preaching the Gospel everywhere !

What is this Society doing ? It is undertaking to pay a part, say one-half, of the salary of persons in new places and enable them to maintain themselves until, by the natural growth of their parishes, they shall become self-sustaining. One after another, they are coming to a condition in which they can sustain themselves. To-day, there are nearly a thousand ministers in new settlements and States, clear to the Pacific coast, preaching the Gospel, who would not be able to preach if it were not for the support which they

receive from the Home Missionary Society. They are gathering church after church, and they are making the wilderness to bud and blossom as the rose.

Next to the Methodist circuit rider, I think is the American Home missionary. No theological difference, no sectarian pride should prevent us from paying tribute where it is due ; and nothing shall prevent me from giving to the Methodists that credit which they deserve. I lived where I saw their work, and as long as I live I shall thank God for the Methodist preacher, in those circuits where, without him, there would have been barbarism unilluminated. They have been a light from the beginning. We owe more of the primitive development of Christianity in the West to Methodist circuits than to any other one agency. After them came others who carried the work on higher ; and they were largely of Home missionaries, who went out from the East, and lived and died in the West, or are living there now, laying the foundation for many generations to come. We are debtors to them because they need ; we are debtors to the West, because it is necessitous ; and, we are debtors to this country, not simply because it is our country, but because the South, and the South-West, and the West, to the Pacific Ocean, are in want of those institutions which have done so much for society in the East ; and we should contribute to their support according to this law.

Brethren, there are many of you who, when you were young, had serious thoughts about preaching the Gospel ; but God overruled your desire, your way was blocked, and you were prevented from carrying out your intention, by the failure of your health or some other Providential circumstance. Yet you never ceased to regret that you could not have preached ; and your boyish wish has always been a sort of romance or sacred inward feeling with you. But, although you never did as you wished to, it is in your power to preach by another's voice. You can send in your place one whose tongue is loosed, and who has power of mind and heart to do that which you wanted to do.

There is many a woman who consecrated her son to the Christian ministry ; with such a pride as only a mother knows



how to feel, she meant that her boy should go forth and preach. But he died ; and henceforth there was a void in the mother's heart ; but it is in her power to open that lip in another, and let one who came not from her loins stand in the place of her dead son, and do the work that she meant he should do.

There are many of you that would like to be preachers, but you have not the requisite education, or your circumstances will not admit of your going out to preach ; yet you can preach by proxy. You can help men preach in the wilderness, on the mountain-side, among the mines, and along the far-off ocean. You can make yourselves felt all over these United States. And this American Home Missionary Society is the agency through which we contribute means to enable men to go forth and preach where the people cannot have the Gospel unless they receive it wholly or in part from us.

Do not say, now, I pray you, one word about the times. I do not believe there are many of you that would be hurt by contributing. If you are on the eve of bankruptcy then you ought not to contribute ; but if you are in comfortable circumstances it seems to me that this law is upon you—the great law of strength and of having. You owe your means, your power, yourselves, to those who are less fortunate than you ; and I throw open to you the great field of the South and West.

Here is a society that is putting forth a thousand men to labor in the cause of God, who are dependent for at least one half of their support upon the prosperous churches in the East ; and a church as prosperous as this has been and is cannot be exempt from the duty of aiding them. The whole land needs you, and has a right to your power and influence. I therefore beg of you to make a generous contribution in money, or by subscriptions upon the papers which have been distributed through the house ;—and I believe you will do it.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

WE draw near to thee, this morning, our Father, not as suppliants, but with grateful testimony for thy goodness. We are supplied, and more than supplied. Our cup runneth over. So great are the kindnesses of thy providence, and so great are the manifestations of thy love in Jesus Christ, that our hearts say, Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our life; and wherever we are we shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. For where is there, under the sky, a place that is not thy dwelling? We rejoice, O God, in thy goodness, which is a stream flowing from under the Throne. All power and majesty are in the Throne. All bounties come from thy wisdom, and power, and majesty. Thou art, thyself, the light whose beams stream forth forever more. Thou art infinite love, and thou art forever serving and doing good to those in heaven, and those on earth, and those everywhere, that need. By thy power thou art fashioning, and forming, and bringing forth, and exalting. It is thy nature to do these things. Thus thou dost work upon things that are infinitely small, and remote, and imperfect. Thou art an eternal Workman, bringing forth the universe from all that is low. With infinite patience thou art awaiting men's development, educating and exalting them. Thou art carrying forward the work which thou hast begun into infinite realms beyond our present knowledge. And we wonder and adore in contemplating these things. If thou art such a One, how poor are we! If thou art the servant of all, and if thy strength is for weakness, if thy purity is for sin, if thy goodness is for selfishness, and if thy whole being is to be the food of those who need, what manner of men ought we to be, if we call ourselves by thy name! We rebuke ourselves for the narrow range of our kindness; for our want of disinterestedness and bounty; for our self-service; for all the various ways in which we seek to serve ourselves through others, instead of serving others for their own sake. May we know what it is to be disciples of Christ, children of God, in the inner man, and not by saying, Lord, Lord!

Grant, we pray thee, to everyone of us, a more profound conviction of the hatefulness of sin. More and more may we detest selfishness. More and more may we learn rather to serve than to be served.

We pray that we may learn patience of thee, and practice it by following thine example. Thou that didst suffer, and revile not, but wert led as a lamb to the slaughter, grant that we may learn of thy meekness and of thy gentleness, and find rest unto our souls that are disturbed by pride, and by avarice, and by passion. O, grant that the life of Jesus, and the principle of his life, may enter into us, and that there may be spoken to the tumult and storm of our passions that word of peace which shall allay them.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon us this morning, as we are gathered here for worship. Accept our thought-worship, and all the unuttered adoration of our deepest feelings. Accept that which we would, and do not.

Grant, we pray thee, that more and more we may rejoice in the

Lord, and not in our outward circumstance or estate. Wilt thou give us thy succor to-day, according as thine eye beholds that there is need. For under how much prosperity there is yet great sorrow! How many that are sealed and closed unto the eyes of men, need thy compassion and thy care! Thou that lookest within, we pray that thou wilt discern their innermost want. Grant that those needs which we ourselves do not discern, which have not disclosed themselves to us, but that yet work pain, may this day be touched by thy Spirit. Cleanse us in thought, and in fountain of thought; in feeling, and in the sources of feeling. Renew the inward man, and purify it, that it may be righteous, and pure, and peaceful, and loving. Dwell in us. Make our hearts such that thou canst dwell in them. Sanctify all sorrow, all disappointment, all thwartings and overthrowings, all mistakes, all sins, all stumblings. Recover thy servants out of every ill. We pray, not so much that thou wilt answer their prayer for outward prosperity, as that thou wilt be gracious unto their cries. Grant that, whatever may befall the outward man, the inward man may be renewed day by day. If our portion in this life is not desirable, if our bread be bitter on earth, grant, we pray thee, that we may be sustained by the abiding consciousness of a better life hereafter, where we shall see thee, and be as thou art. By the discipline of sin and sorrow in the world that now is, may we be prepared for the glory and joy of the life that is to come. May bereavements, fears, sorrows of every name, shames, limitations, wants, cares, all troubles that come to the soul, bring to us this day that divine blessing which shall turn them into messengers of good.

We pray that thou wilt bless not ourselves alone, but all those who worship in all churches everywhere. Grant that thy servants may no longer dispute about instruments, and ordinances, and outward forms, but be united in a genuine desire to succor their fellow-men. In that desire, may they meet together, and work hand in hand, and heart to heart.

We pray for peace in all our land, where brethren are arrayed against each other; where men overreach men; where power exerts itself in ways that are selfish. O let the breath of the gospel of peace be breathed throughout this nation. May all the outward life of society, and all its inward institutions, be conformed to the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. We pray that the knowledge of Christ may be spread abroad into every part of our land. May all classes of men know of the great salvation, and experience the divine power, and be raised from the carnal life into a truly spiritual life.

Establish thy cause not only in this nation, but in every nation. O, let the time come when this world shall no longer roll eclipsed. Make it shine out, an orb redeemed, ordained, with the inward light that thou shalt grant unto it, by thine own indwelling. May the day come when the voice crying to the nations shall be, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord Jesus Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever! Reign, thou that art Lord of lords and King of kings—reign in every heart, in every nation, in all time.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit. *Amen.*





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
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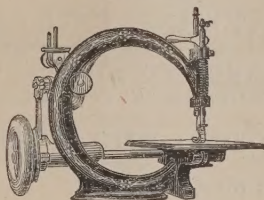
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